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Travel Controls in North Hamgyŏng Province

1. In October 1952 persons travelling in North Hamgyŏng Province had to have three basic documents: citizenship certificate, draft registration certificate if between the ages of 18 and 40, and immunization certificate.¹ Persons travelling as merchants also had to have a commercial registration card. Men between the ages of 18 and 30 had to carry a membership card in the Korean Democratic Youth Alliance or the North Korean Labor Party.
2. Persons travelling on foot had their documents checked at the entrance to villages by female members of the Korean Democratic Youth Alliance. Those travelling by vehicle were stopped and checked at check-points set up on roads between villages and cities.
3. North Korean army mail messengers had the greatest freedom of movement. They were identified by an arm band bearing the Korean words "secret courier" (ki t'ong) and carried arms and food for the journey. Oxcart drivers got special consideration in travelling because oxcarts were mainly used as transport for government organizations.
4. Persons who had the greatest difficulty travelling were men between the ages of 18 and 25 who were not in uniform, because they had to show adequate reason for not being in the army, such as a discharge certificate or a draft exemption certificate, which could be obtained only from the district (myŏn) military mobilization department.

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5. In October 1952 the vehicle check-point at EB-508037 at the northern entrance to Chuuronjang (129-36, 41-35) (EB-5003) was manned by four North Korean army military policemen. They checked only the documents of the drivers of vehicles and did not check the documents of passengers. The check-point for Nanam (129-41, 41-43) (EB-5718) was at EB-573166 and was manned by two military policemen and two officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. These guards made passengers and drivers dismount from their vehicles, checked all documentation, and asked questions about the origin and destination of the vehicle. There were two North Korean army military policemen at EB-590260 checking vehicles in the same manner as the policemen at the Chuuronjang check-point.
6. On 16 October 1952 there were no traffic control points on the main supply route between Ch'ongjin and Tanch'on. The traffic moved on the road only between sunset and sunrise. Drivers stopped each other to ask about air-raid conditions on the road ahead. Trucks moved with lights on unless there was danger of an air raid, in which case the lights would be turned off.
7. On 16 October there was a passenger pick-up point at EB-606202, just to the south of Ch'ongjin. Persons travelling south gathered at this point at dusk and bargained with truck drivers for passage. There was no set price for travel. Military personnel were charged less than civilians and often were allowed to go free if they were on official business. Formerly this was a vehicle check-point and the wooden barricade was still there. About ten to twelve trucks passed this point each night.

Travel Controls in South Hamgyong Province

8. On 16 October 1952 on the northern outskirts of Songjin, at EA-168024, there was a vehicle check-point manned by North Korean army military police armed with Soviet-made sub-machine guns. The police checked only military personnel for documentation and travel authorization. At the same point were several unarmed policewomen who checked civilian personnel by asking questions about points of departure and destination and about the contents of vehicles.

1. Comment. For a recent report on these certificates and other North Korean documentation,

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